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General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session
Agenda items 40, 41 and 85

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Identical letters dated 1 February 2001 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

I wish to convey to you the serious concern of the Palestinian leadership regarding the possible use by Israel, the occupying Power, of depleted uranium shells against Palestinian targets, especially during the more recent and intensified Israeli military campaign over the last few months. Several reports have indicated that Israel has used such ammunition, causing great anxiety among the Palestinian people in the occupied territory.

In this connection, on 30 January 2001, the Israeli army issued a press statement in which it stated that "the Israeli army has never utilized these munitions against any civilian population". This language can only indicate that the Israeli army does indeed possess this kind of ammunition in its arsenal and that it has used it in the past. Further, the issue of "civilian population" remains a matter of definition, as Israel has repeatedly indicated in the past. In our opinion, this press statement alone justifies raising the issue in a serious way and calls for field inspection by appropriate, trained inspectors.

We call upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in cooperation with the Security Council, to give this important matter the necessary attention, including looking into the possibilities of the above-mentioned inspection.

01-23589 (E) 010201

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter distributed as an official document of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 40, 41 and 85, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nasser **Al-Kidwa**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

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General Assembly

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Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 73
General and complete disarmament

Letter dated 1 February 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement regarding the completion of the reduction of excessive Russian conventional weapons and military equipment deployed in the territory of Georgia, in accordance with the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE treaty) and its integral part — Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and Georgia (Joint Statement) made at the Istanbul Summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on 17 November 1999 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 73.

(*Signed*) Peter **Chkheidze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

01-23732 (E) 080201

Annex to the letter dated 1 February 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations

Upon instructions received from my Government, I am authorized to inform you that, in accordance with its obligations under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) and its integral part — Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and Georgia (Joint Statement) made at the Istanbul Summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on 17 November 1999 — the Russian Federation, with the assistance of Georgia and other OSCE States, has completed its reduction of excessive Russian conventional weapons and military hardware located in the territory of Georgia by the set deadline of 31 December 2000 (see appendix). This reduction constitutes the first phase of the withdrawal of the Russian military presence from the territory of Georgia.

In spite of a number of difficulties that presented themselves during the negotiation process, the parties demonstrated the political will and commitment necessary to carry out the reduction of excessive Russian military equipment in a transparent and efficient manner. In this regard, we would like to express our gratitude and sincere appreciation to all countries involved in this process, whose support was instrumental to the success of the reduction.

Alongside of the above-mentioned we would like to stress that the Joint Statement contains another stage, even more crucial, which calls for the closure of the remaining Russian military bases in Georgia (located in Vaziani and Gudauta) by 1 July 2001. We hope that the second element will also be fully implemented in the spirit of transparency and cooperation.

Another important issue that is to be agreed according to the Joint Statement is the duration of the temporary deployment of two remaining Russian military bases in Georgia (located in Batumi and Akhalkhalaki). In that regard, I wish to focus your attention on two principal agreements reached during the negotiations:

1. The eventual goal of the Russian military forces reduction process is the complete liberation of the territory of Georgia from foreign military presence;

2. The duration of the functioning of Russian military bases in Georgia will be determined by a period necessary for the elimination of such functioning.

We would like to express our concern regarding the position of the Russian side, which stated that all provisions of the Joint Statement are interrelated and subject to implementation in all aspects.

In this regard, the Government of Georgia finds absolutely unacceptable any attempts to link improperly other obligations determined by the Joint Statement, leading therefore to their overall blockage.

We believe that the full, timely and unconditional completion of the withdrawal as set forth in the Russian-Georgian Joint Statement will contribute to

the normalization of relations between our two countries which had deteriorated in other spheres and strengthen the stability and security of the whole region.

The negotiations between Georgia and the Russian Federation are still in progress. We will keep the international community informed about the results of these negotiations.

Appendix

Information on the results of the reduction process of Russian treaty-limited equipment (TLE) in the territory of Georgia

MILITARY BASE	TLE BEFORE THE WITHDRAWAL		TOTAL OF TLE WITHDRAWN	UTILIZED	REMAINING ON THE BASE	REMARKS
VAZIANI	TANKS	31	31		0	4 ACVs were transferred from Vaziani base to Batumi base.
	ACVs	54	28*		0	
	ARTILLERY	16	16		0	
TBILISI TANK REPAIR FACILITY	TANKS	28	4	24	0	7 ACVs were transferred from Tbilisi Tank Repair Facility to Batumi base.
	ACVs	102	28*	67	0	
	ARTILLERY	2		2	0	
GUDAUTA	TANKS	0			0	34 ACVs of Gudauta base were transferred to the peacekeeping forces located in Gali district and they will be assigned to Batumi base till the end of year 2000.
	ACVs	102	78*		0	
	ARTILLERY	11	11		0	
BATUMI	TANKS	41			41	11 ACVs were added to Batumi base from Tbilisi Tank Repair Facility and Vaziani base; 134 ACVs of peacekeeping forces located in Gali district will be assigned to Batumi base till the end of year 2000.
	ACVs	101	61		51*	
	ARTILLERY	76			76	
AKHALKALAKI	TANKS	41			41	3 Artillery pieces were added to Akhalkalaki base from Tskhinvali district; 38 ACVs of peacekeeping forces located in Tskhinvali district will be assigned to Akhalkalaki base till the end of year 2000.
	ACVs	127	76	23	38	
	ARTILLERY	61			64*	
PEACEKEEPING FORCES	TANKS	0			0	34 ACVs of Gudauta base were added to the armaments of peacekeeping forces; 3 Artillery pieces were transferred to Akhalkalaki base; All armaments of peacekeeping forces will be assigned to Batumi base (134 ACVs located in Gali district) and to Akhalkalaki base (38 ACVs located in Tskhinvali district) till the end of year 2000.
	ACVs	139			87	
	ARTILLERY	3			0*	
TOTAL:	954		375 491	116	463	During the year 2000 Russian TLE was reduced by 491 pieces; 463 pieces of TLE still remain on the territory of Georgia; among them: in Akhalkalaki – 143, in Batumi – 148, in Gali district – 134, in Tskhinvali district – 38 pieces. The whole amount of the above mentioned armaments will be assigned accordingly to two military bases: 271 pieces to Batumi base and 192 pieces to Akhalkalaki base.

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Agenda item 164
Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 2 February 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to several incidents of Palestinian terrorism which have claimed the lives of four Israelis in the past week.

On the evening of Thursday, 25 January 2001, 45-year-old Jerusalem resident, Akiva Pashkos, was shot dead near the Atarot industrial zone, just north of the city. Pashkos, who worked as a manager in a tissue factory in Atarot, had taken several Arab workers from the factory to the A-Ram junction in his van and dropped them off at about 6.30 p.m. On his way back, at the southern entrance to Atarot, close to the Arab village of Bir Naballah, several shots were fired at his car, and he was fatally wounded. Soldiers who raced to the scene also came under fire from the gunmen, but there were no casualties. The area of the Atarot industrial zone has been the scene of repeated shooting, stone-throwing, and firebombing attacks over the past four months.

On Monday, 29 January, 55-year-old Arieh Hershkovitz, a father of four and a grandfather of four, died in a hail of bullets fired from a passing vehicle as he drove on the highway between the Rama junction and Adam (Geva Binyamin). Hershkovitz was travelling to the town of Beit El when he stopped to pick up Yonathan Ben-Ami, who was hitchhiking home. The pair were travelling east when terrorists in a red vehicle opened fire at their car and fled towards the nearby Palestinian-controlled area. At least three bullets passed through the car's windshield, fatally wounding Hershkovitz. Ben-Ami was unhurt and managed to escape and alert the authorities.

The third victim was 23-year-old Lior Attiah, an Israeli civilian from the northern town of Afula, who was fatally shot yesterday, 1 February, on the outskirts of the Palestinian-controlled town of Jenin. Reports indicate that Attiah, who was accompanied by a friend, Mohammad Zuabi of Nazareth, was supposed to be meeting Palestinian acquaintances to pick up his car. The meeting took place on a side road, about 100 metres from a Palestinian police checkpoint. Upon arrival, Attiah was shot in the head, chest and stomach by Palestinian gunmen before being evacuated to a hospital in Jenin. From there, he was transferred to the Israeli Defence Forces and then on to a hospital in Afula where he died shortly thereafter.

01-23780 (E) 020201

Zuabi managed to get away, making it back to the Israeli army checkpoint where he reported the incident.

In the most recent attack, Dr. Shmuel Gillis, a 42-year-old father of five, was murdered as he returned home from Jerusalem in his car. A senior physician at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem, Dr. Gillis was travelling south from Jerusalem shortly before 8 p.m. when Palestinian gunmen fired at least 10 bullets into his car, hitting him in the neck and chest and causing the car to overturn by the side of the road.

These murders, which have taken place amidst intensive negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians at Taba, Egypt, are the four latest in a steady series of attacks directed at Israeli civilians in recent weeks. I have detailed these attacks in a number of letters addressed to you, most recently in my letter dated 25 January 2001 (A/55/748-S/2001/81), which recalled the murders of Motti Dayan and Etgar Zeitouny near the Palestinian-controlled town of Tulkarm, and in my letter of 23 January 2001 (A/55/742-S/2001/71) which detailed the murders of Ofir Rahum and Ronni Tsalah. These attacks followed a series of bombings in Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv and other locations which killed six Israelis and wounded well over 60 and which were reported in my letters dated 28 December 2000 (A/55/719-S/2000/1252), 22 November 2000 (A/55/641-S/2000/1114), 20 November 2000 (A/55/634-S/2000/1108), and 2 November 2000 (A/55/540-S/2000/1065). These latest murders bring to 51 the total of Israelis killed in terrorist attacks since the outbreak of violence in late September.

The recent wave of attacks has targeted Israeli civilians who were engaged in entirely peaceful activities. Increasingly, Israelis in all areas of the country have become targets as they travel on roads, use public transportation, shop in the marketplace, and even sit peacefully in their homes. The Palestinian Authority has done virtually nothing to curb the violence, and in fact continues to encourage it through official media outlets and other means.

Israel therefore continues to hold the Palestinian Authority responsible for these attacks, in light of both the Palestinian Authority's ongoing incitement to violence as well as the fundamental commitment made by Palestinian Authority Chairman Yassir Arafat in his letter of 9 September 1993, which formed the bedrock for more than seven years of peacemaking. In the letter, Chairman Arafat committed the Palestinian leadership to peacefully resolving the conflict and to renouncing the use of violence and terrorism. More importantly, Chairman Arafat resolved to ensure the compliance of all elements and personnel under his authority, to prevent violations and discipline violators.

The failure of the Palestinian leadership to abide by this commitment has directly contributed to the outbreak of violence and to the proliferation of terrorist attacks in recent months. A final peace settlement can only be sustained by a fundamental commitment to non-violence and Israel calls upon the Palestinian leadership to reaffirm its allegiance to that principle.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 164, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative